



Flathead Conservation District
133 Interstate Lane, Kalispell, MT 59901
www.flatheadcd.org 406-752-4220

CALL TO ORDER & ATTENDANCE

Chair Pete Woll called the June 24, 2019, Business meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. in the conference room.

Board members present:

Pete Woll, Chair; Lori Curtis, Vice Chair; Dean Sirucek, Secretary/Treasurer; John Ellis, Supervisor; Verdell Jackson, Supervisor; Ronald Buentemeier, Supervisor; Lech Naumovich, Supervisor, being a quorum of the Board.

Also, in attendance were: Donna Pridmore, Associate Supervisor; Valerie Kurth, Hailey Graf and Ginger Kauffman, FCD staff; Gary Purdy; Samantha Tappenbeck, Soil & Water Conservation Districts of Montana (SWCDM); Chloe Erb; Chris Leever, Whitefish Tree Service.

MINUTES

Lori Curtis motioned “to approve the minutes of the May 28, 2019, Business meeting as presented.” Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Lori Curtis motioned “to approve the minutes of the June 10, 2019, 310-Stream Permit meeting as presented.” Dean Sirucek seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE

Email: Meetings

1. Whitefish Planning Board Meeting, June 20, 2019, 6:00 P.M., Whitefish City Council Chambers. <http://www.cityofwhitefish.org/>

Email: Workshops, Events

1. Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) workshop June 21, Kalispell.
Contact Sara Ganter 518-727-8275 uppercolumbia3@gmail.com

Email: Publications, Bulletins, Newsletters

1. National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD)
Conservation Clips <https://www.nacdnet.org/>
2. The Montana Invasive Species Bulletin
<http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/cardd/montana-invasive-species-program/misc>



FINANCIAL

The following bills were reviewed:

1. Black Gold Top Soil & Farm \$4,009.00
2. Carroll College \$500.00
3. CenturyLink \$299.88
4. Concordia University Texas \$1,000.00
5. FVCC \$500.00
6. Goshen College \$1,000.00
7. Green Earth Gardening \$500.00
8. Laurence Magone \$1,031.18
9. MACo \$3,624.00
10. Montana State University Bozeman \$500.00
11. VISA \$446.41
12. Montana State University Bozeman \$1,000.00
13. Flathead County Planning & Zoning \$345.00
14. David Vissotzky \$420.00

John Ellis motioned “to approve the bills as presented.” Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

PETERSEN, FL2019036E, Whitefish River, notice of Emergency: John Ellis stated Chris Leever, Whitefish Tree Service, had cut the branches off of the tree that had fallen into the Whitefish River, and noted that the Notice of Emergency that was filed by the Petersen’s will be on the July 8th meeting agenda.

Chris explained that he had been contacted by Don Petersen about tree. They determined that it posed a hazard for recreationalists that needed to be dealt with as soon as possible. The tree is still attached to the bank, and he only removed the branches that were considered to be posing a danger to people floating the river. He felt that his work mitigated the risk while still maintaining aquatic habitat. The board and Chris discussed property ownership in relation to the tree and the 310 notice of emergency process. John emphasized that no one has filed a complaint about the branch removal, and he appreciated the work Chris had done. Pete added if this type of thing happens again and it is on private property on a perennial stream, contact the district office. Ronald noted that it is ultimately the landowner’s responsibility.

College Scholarship: Chloe Erb stated she just graduated from Flathead High School and will be attending Goshen College in Indiana this fall to study animal science. She thanked the board for providing the scholarship opportunity and expressed her gratitude.

310

Purdy, FL2019037, Flathead River, road: Lori Curtis stated she, Kenny Breidinger, Ronald Buentemeier and Mr. Purdy were at the onsite inspection. She explained that Mr. Purdy was trying to sell his home, but potential buyers noted the lack of river access. Mr. Purdy hired



someone to create access to the river. Later, when he found out he needed a permit for the work, he filed an application. Lori showed photos that documented the steepness of the area and stated the work done well. She had just a few recommendations. The pathway is very steep and is intended for foot traffic, not vehicles. There are three places where water could cause bank erosion to the river, so she recommended adding drainage structures. Mr. Purdy explained that the disturbed area has been hydroseeded and he will seed more if necessary. He was concerned about erosion and was relieved that Kenny and Lori thought the water bars would help.

Lori Curtis motioned “to approve the application with modifications which are installing 3 water bars per the Team Member Report. The 15-day waiting period is waived.” Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously. *Ronald Buentemeier abstained from voting.*

NEW BUSINESS

Weed Department Partnership: Pete Woll explained that the Weed Dept. has a Weed Education and Compliance Officer that is funded ¾ time; however, the position has high turnover because it is not full-time. Pete had developed this idea with Jed Fisher, Director of the Weed Department, in an effort to increase collaboration with the Weed Dept and make the position full time. Valerie Kurth and Hailey Graf provided the following list of opportunities for collaboration with the Weed Dept.:

Outreach

- Weed control information for landowners on Flathead CD website
- Information table at Northwest Montana Fair and other events
- Workshops on weed control as part of Demonstration Garden activities

Projects and Programs

- Cost-share program -guidance, advice, site visits and recommendations
- Assistance with Demonstration Garden -implementation, events and maintenance
- Assistance with Cow Creek – weed control, planting, monitoring

Noel Jinnings is currently in the position, and she has already helped Flathead CD with education events, such as the fair, and information for the website. Valerie stated that she thought Noel would be a great asset to the cost-share program since about 75% of the applications are for weed control.

Pete explained that he and Jed wanted to try this arrangement for a 3-year trial period. Noel would continue to be on the Weed Dept’s payroll, but Flathead CD would contribute \$15,000 per year. Noel would then be able to help Flathead CD with various projects and programs throughout the year. Funds could come from the Conservation Practices Other budget line. John Ellis asked if the district has ever done something like this before and if it was legal. Supervisors stated no it had not been done before, but Valerie explained that she had talked with Laurie Zeller at DNRC, who thought it was a great idea. Because both are government agencies, we just need a simple agreement between the two, and don’t need to worry about procurement law. It is basically a win-win situation because Noel can help Flathead CD and continue to work on weed control throughout the county, which is one of the district’s biggest concerns. John asked why Flathead County cannot afford to pay their own employee full time. Pete replied the Weed Dept. doesn’t need the employee during the



winter as there are no weeds, however, that is when the paperwork and education needs to be done. Lori Curtis noted that the position has always been seasonal. Pete added that right now Flathead County is cutting back on many things. Verdell Jackson asked if Pete had talked to the county commissioners. Pete stated yes, and Jed Fisher has talked to their HR office. There is no problem as long as there is an agreement between Flathead CD and the Weed Dept. Pete clarified that the district would add the \$15,000.00 to the upcoming fiscal year budget.

Discussion followed regarding writing the agreement, details in the agreement and if the district would have a chance to review it. Pete stated it would be reviewed by the district, Flathead County Weed Dept. and the County Attorney's office. Lech Naumovich thought it was a great idea to do this kind of partnership, however, his concerns were liability and insurance. Pete stated all employee liabilities are the responsibility of Flathead County. Ronald Buentemeier voiced concerned about past interactions between the Weed Departments and the public. Hailey Graf stated the district has cost-share applicants that have worked with Noel, and their feedback has been very positive. Her attitude toward compliance, willingness to work with landowners, and empathy are why Jed wants to keep her in this position. Ronald voiced concern about the next person if Noel were to leave. Lori suggested that the Agreement be good for 3 years but could be reassessed each year to make sure it is still meeting the needs of the district and the Weed Dept. Pete noted this would be a trial period. Valerie suggested that Noel could come to a Flathead CD meeting to talk about her position and how the Weed Dept. works with landowners. John asked what percentage of her time would be given to the district based on \$15,000. Pete said it would be about 2-3 months or about ¼ of her time. Lori stated this an opportunity to form a solid agreement, and Lech added that it can increase retention. Pete added that we have a good working relationship with the Weed Dept., and Lech noted that it sounds like a win/win.

Lech Naumovich motioned "to support the Weed Dept partnership with a Memorandum of Agreement to be put into place for up to \$15,000 per year for 3 years, with an annual option to renew." Lori Curtis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Pete stated he would have the Weed Dept. begin working with the district on the agreement.

Flathead Basin Stormwater Summary Plan: Dean Sirucek stated that, in 2011, Flathead CD was a partner, along with the Flathead Basin Commission (FBC), in the development of the existing sewage and septic tank inventories for the County, which were tied to water quality and the TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load).

Dean explained that the Flathead Basin Commission (FBC) will be submitting an application for a Big Sky Watershed Corps (BSWC) Member to compile available stormwater drainage data within Flathead County. The first year will include the Kalispell, Whitefish, Columbia Falls, Lakeside, Bigfork and Evergreen areas. The Member will be hosted by the City of Kalispell and supervised by Casey Lewis, Environmental Specialist.

The FBC meets this Wednesday and will be discussing how or if they could potentially fund this BSWC member. Dean wondered if Flathead CD could provide support for the member, such as supplying a letter of support for grant funding, co-sponsoring a grant, or vehicle use.



Dean expressed hope that Flathead CD would be a sponsor of the project because of its participation in the TMDL process and the septic inventory done in 2011. Pete Woll thought it might be better to have the district help pay mileage costs or something else instead of using the district vehicle. Dean noted that he is on the committee that is putting this together and wanted to be able to say that Flathead CD supports the project and may be able to help financially.

Lori Curtis motioned “the FCD expresses general support for the Big Sky Watershed Corp member working on the Flathead County Stormwater Project.” John Ellis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Logo: Valerie Kurth stated a few months ago the board supported the logo committee’s recommendation to select Snow Ghost to work on a new logo design. Snow Ghost submitted 8 possible designs. Last week, the committee narrowed it down to 3, which are provided in the meeting folders. The general consensus from the committee is that we prefer the first two options. Board members and staff provided input and discussed design elements, fonts, the tag line, the ability to produce in grey scale or black and white, and readability. Lech Naumovich and Lori Curtis both recommended the tag line be changed to non-italic font and to create a square iteration for logo #2.

John Ellis motioned “to adopt logo #2 for the Flathead CD.” Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Valerie noted that Snow Ghost will help the district with layout for letterhead, business cards and email signatures.

Cost-Share Program: Valerie Kurth stated a cost-share program summary sheet for the past fiscal year was included in the folders. She explained this is the most applications the district has handled in past 5 years. A total of eight projects were funded. Five were completed and have been paid out. One person was unable to complete their project. Greg Magone is doing a 2-year reforestation project, so he will be re-applying this fall for year 2. Valerie noted that the five that have been completed came in at or below their estimated budget. The last one is Vissotzky, and they have asked for a one-year extension to do the seeding. They have already completed the weed control, and the seeding total will be \$873.48, so Flathead CD share will be \$655.11. Lech Naumovich asked Valerie if she supported the project. Valerie replied yes and clarified that Vissotzky and Magone will go into the next fiscal year.

Lori Curtis motioned “to extend the Vissotzky cost-share contract for 1-year for seeding in the amount \$655.11.” Dean Sirucek seconded. Motion carried with one no vote. Valerie again noted that a partial payment of \$420 to Vissotzky (weed control) was approved earlier this evening.

Lech Naumovich stated that the numbers in the summary are impressive. The total estimated cost for Flathead CD was \$10,309.99 and the actual payment was \$3,457.76. It speaks highly of the people using money wisely and is appreciated.



Weed Control at Owen Sowerwine Natural Area: Valerie Kurth explained the reason for the recent phone poll regarding weed control at Owen Sowerwine Natural Area (OSNA). She explained that Flathead Audubon contacted the district about a cost-share project at the OSNA in May 2018. OSNA is owned by the state, and, while Flathead Audubon and Montana Audubon lease the property, the groups do not receive any assistance from the state. Last year, we hoped this could be a partnership with Flathead County Weed Dept., but, unfortunately, the Weed Department could not do the spraying until this past spring. However, they were only able to do the outer area because the interior was too brushy to spray without a backpack sprayer. The Weed Dept. billed the district for \$260, but the original motion approved \$2000. Flathead Audubon was still hoping to get help and expand their weed control efforts. They were able to get a contractor to work on the remainder of the property and it will not exceed \$500. Valerie noted that Flathead Audubon is very thankful for the support. Discussion followed regarding the acreage size and types of weeds.

Lori Curtis motioned “to approve the 6/14/19 phone poll to cover weed control at OSNA.” Dean Sirucek seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

District Insurance Agent Appointment & Agreement: Valerie Kurth stated the district received the annual insurance premium invoice from MACo. She explained that a few months ago they asked for additional information because they were re-evaluating all the premiums for all the conservation districts across the state. Our new premium is approximately \$400 less than last year. They asked that the district sign an Agreement between MACo, our insurance agent Kim Thomas with PayneWest Insurance, and the Flathead Conservation District. Copies were provided to the board and Valerie noted that since this is something new, we sent it to Don Macintyre for review. He thought it was a typical insurance agreement. Verdell Jackson asked what the amount was on the invoice. Staff stated the payment was approved earlier in the amount of \$3624.00.

John Ellis motioned “to approve the Property & Casualty Agent Appointment & Agreement dated 6/20/2019 between Flathead CD, MACo Property & Casualty Trust, and PayneWest Insurance.” Dean Sirucek seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

DNRC 223 Grant #23G-19-3639 Demonstration Garden Agreement: Hailey Graf reported the district received the DNRC 223-grant for education supplies and construction of the Demonstration Garden in the amount of \$5000. The Agreement must be approved and signed then sent back to DNRC.

Dean Sirucek motioned “to approve the DNRC 223 grant #23G-19-3639 Agreement.” Lori Curtis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

End of Month Budget Report (May): The May 2019 End of Month budget report was reviewed with the board. Dean Sirucek motioned “to approve the May End of Month report.” Lori Curtis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.



REPORTS

Flathead CD Staff: Valerie Kurth & Hailey Graf reported

District Office and Outreach

1. Advertisements: Flathead Beacon – 310 summer ad with QR code & Cost-share program ad.
2. Hailey presented the Demonstration Garden grant application (via conference call) to the Resource Conservation Advisory Council on May 29th.
3. Valerie, Hailey, and Ginger Kauffman participated in the MACD Convention planning meeting on June 13th. Hailey and Pete discussed and selected the menu items, and all have been working on follow-up tasks.
4. Hailey met with Casey Lewis, Environmental Specialist with the City of Kalispell, to discuss the SWCDM grant and next steps for the rain garden initiative
5. Hailey attended the River to Lake Initiative meeting on June 12th.
6. Valerie and Ginger have been coordinating timesheets and payroll with Danner Pickering, our short-term employee who is conducting monitoring for dyer's woad.
7. Valerie attended and took the minutes for the Local Working Group meeting on May 29th.
8. Valerie is coordinating the technical review for the Hogan 310 permit application.
9. Valerie organized a logo committee meeting with Gina Gagnon from Snow Ghost.

On-the-Ground Projects

Cow Creek – Valerie coordinated three meetings during the first week of June: a site meeting with Craig Workman and Karin Hilding to discuss on-the-ground work; a partner meeting; and a consultation with Ben Conard (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service) and Chris Hammond (FWP) regarding bald eagle management recommendations. Valerie continues to work on the permitting and other logistics. She wrote and submitted the interim report to DEQ.

Landowner Programs

Cost-Share Program – Valerie continues to work with landowners to complete their contracts. She and Hailey Graf conducted two follow-up visits on June 7th. One landowner requested an extension (Vissotzky), one will be submitting an application for year 2 of his project (Magone), and a third withdrew from the program. Valerie and Hailey posted information about the new program structure to the website and advertised the fall 2019 weed control program. Valerie conducted one site consultation with a landowner and has received several inquiries about assistance for weed control. She has been coordinating weed control work at Owen Sowerwine Natural Area with Flathead Audubon and the Flathead County Weed Dept.

Education and Outreach

Rolling Rivers Trailer – Hailey participated in the Lone Pine Junior Ranger Days and used the RRT to present on riparian area functions and nonpoint source pollution to approximately 100, 4th grade students on June 6th.

Demonstration Garden – The Demonstration Garden project was awarded \$5,000 through the HB223 grant by the Resource Conservation Advisory Council. This funding will go



towards educational supplies, workshops, and purchasing plants. Valerie and Hailey produced the first in a series of how-to videos, this one describes how to conduct soil sampling. The 2-minute video can be found on our Facebook page and website and has received positive feedback from the public and partner organizations.

For garden construction, noxious weed spraying and rough grading have been completed. Bulk materials, including topsoil, compost, gravel, edging, and weed matting will be delivered over the next couple weeks. Final grading and hardscaping will take place July 8th – 12th. Planting will likely take place the following week, July 15th – 19th. Volunteers would be welcome throughout either week.

Website/social media - Blog post topics for May included: *What's a Riparian Area?* *Herbicides 101*, and *Top 4 Noxious Weed ID Resources*. Over the last 30 days, the website had 627 users and 1,567 pageviews. The Facebook page reached 2,196 users and had 606 post engagements.

Soil & Water Conservation Districts of Montana (SWCDM) Samantha Tappenbeck, reported that her contract has been extended for another 2+ years as SWCDM has received additional funding for her position. Her work plan has been changed. ¼ of her time will be spent doing the work she has been doing the past few years. ½ of her time will be spent assisting district conservationists in developing long range plans and targeted implementation plans for the new Montana Focused Conservation Implementation for EQIP and hosting Local Working Group meetings. The remaining ¼ of her time will be seasonally split between the Irrigation Water Management Service portion of the SWCDM program and the new Flathead Basin Septic Cost-Share Program, which is funded through the DEQ 319. Samantha also noted that there have been some organizational changes for SWCDM.

Natural Resources & Conservation Service (NRCS): Sean Johnson submitted the following report:

- **Programs**
 - EQIP
 - Processing selected applications for funding
 - CSP
 - Processing current applications
- **Review Items**
 - LWG Meeting
 - Held LWG meeting on May 29th. Meeting went well with 18 participants. Will continue efforts to increase collaboration between other agencies to move forward with TIP's and county LRP
 - Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) Webinar with Hailey
 - Could be a potential NRCS funding option for rain gardens when the time comes
- **Upcoming Items**
 - Forestry Field day in North Fork at Allen Chrisman's property
 - Friday June 28th
 - North Fork FireWise Day



- Wednesday July 10th
 - Forest Insect and Disease Training
 - Missoula, July 9th-11th
 - MFC Steering Committee Meeting
 - Great Falls, July 17-18
- **Miscellaneous**
 - Snow Survey as of June 1st
 - Flathead Basin at 71% of historical average of snow/water equivalent
 - Water year-to-date precipitation at 88% of normal
 - Last Water Supply Outlook Report to be issued until this fall

Montana Association of Conservation Districts (MACD): Pete Woll reported that he did not attend the spring board meeting. Dan McGowan, who was still in the probationary period, was released. Jeff Tiberi has been hired on an interim basis and is working 20 hours per week beginning last week. Ann and Jessica took other job positions and resigned. Melissa is now full-time in the office. The next board call is July 8th.

Flathead County Planning Board (FCPB): Dean Sirucek reported there were four subdivisions on the June 12th meeting agenda. Skyview, Eagle View Ridge, Saddlehorn #11, and Rosie Meadows subdivision all went forward to the county commissioners with positive recommendations.

Whitefish City Planning Board (WCPB): John Ellis reported there were five items on the meeting agenda. A subdivision is being proposed near Armory Road and 2nd Street East. Neighbors were concerned about water, as there is no stormwater system (curb, gutter) and water flows off the of the hill through residences and down into Cow Creek. The board voted to approve the subdivision and required that the developer install a stormwater retention system. John noted that Armory Road needs to be rebuilt because there are ditches on both sides, and water flows through a culvert under the road before going down the slope and into Cow Creek. The next meeting is July 18th.

Upper Columbia Conservation Commission (UC3): Lori Curtis reported there are five new positions on the UC3. There will be an official call for people that want to join, and some have already expressed interest. Lori explained the process and stated they hope to fill the positions by October. The next meeting will be held in October, location to be determined.

Haskill Basin Watershed Council (HBWC): The next meeting will be held on September 18th.

Flathead Basin Commission (FBC): See **Flathead Basin Stormwater Summary Plan**.

Dean Sirucek reported the STAG committee, which is a state TMDL advisory group, meets twice a year. The last meeting was held two weeks ago. The agenda included two items: 1) to look at priorities for future TMDL work across the state, and 2) and follow-up or TMDL



Implementation Evaluation. The group prioritized the process and held discussion regarding statewide priorities. A lot of the work in western Montana has been completed, however work still needs to be done in eastern Montana. The next meeting is this Wednesday.

Clark Fork & Kootenai River Basins Council (CFKRBC): Verdell Jackson reported he attended the June 7th executive committee meeting. They are working on the yearly meeting to be held in either September or October. They are also looking for speakers.

MATTERS OF THE BOARD/STAFF

310 Complaint: John Ellis stated that he, Lori Curtis, Lech Naumovich, Donna Pridmore, and Kenny Breidinger had looked at the Voss project, which includes building a lake and a road with a culvert. He drew a schematic on the whiteboard and pointed to where they had inspected the project. Since the inspection, he has been wondering if they should have looked at the other side of the lake, downhill, to see if there was a stream or channel. Pete Woll asked if there was currently water in the lake. John said there was a little water and Donna added that it was groundwater. Dean Sirucek asked if the stream they looked at was perennial. Lori said it was not, and she and John said they had not found any water in it. Lori noted that the property was very dry. Verdell Jackson asked if they thought it was a project. John Ellis thought it was not, based on what they saw. Lori added that the complaint was based on the culvert. Donna clarified that there were two culverts on intermittent streams, and neither one had water. Lori and Lech did not think it was even labeled intermittent on the USGS topo map. Pete asked if it could become an instream pond. Lech did not think the stream continued below the lake. Lori said that the excavator operator was very accommodating, and she did not think there would be a problem with re-visiting the site. Donna added that the adjacent property owner said that there was not an old channel. Lech stated that it is really hard to tell now because so much grading, probably about 20 acres, had already occurred. It would be really hard to tell if hydric vegetation had been growing there, so he suggested requesting preconstruction photos. John Ellis asked Valerie to request photos and drone footage from Roger Noble.

Staff: Valerie Kurth informed the board she has taken a position with DNRC in Helena as a Water Planner for the Clark Fork and Kootenai Basins. Her last day with the district will be July 12th. Pete Woll stated the board will discuss filling the position at the July business meeting. In the duration, Valerie is organizing materials and writing transition notes.



The next 310-meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 8, 2019, 7:00 P.M. in the conference room of the USDA building at 133 Interstate Lane, Kalispell, MT.

Adjournment: Verdell Jackson motioned “to adjourn.” Lori Curtis seconded. Motion carried unanimously. As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 P.M.

Submitted By:

Ginger Kauffman
Administrator

Valerie Kurth, Ph. D
Resource Conservationist

Minutes approved by FCD Board motion made on:

<u>7/8/2019</u>	<u>Pete Woll</u>	<u>Chair</u>
(Date)	(Signature)	(Title – Chair etc.)

